

ANNUAL REPORTS  
OF THE  
Medical Officer of Health and Inspector of  
Nuisances,  
FOR THE YEAR 1920.

---

TO THE RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL FOR  
ROMNEY MARSH.

---

GENTLEMEN,

The population of the district in 1901 was, according to the census 2,563. In 1911 it was 2,797. The population for 1919 is estimated by the Registrar General as 2,684. The Rural District of Romney Marsh together with Boroughs of New Romney and Lydd occupies that triangle or peninsula, with curved base, with Hythe, Rye and Dungeness at the angles. The whole of this land has been recovered from the sea at some time. The district is divided into two parts, East and West by the Rhea Wall, and the physical conditions differ on the two sides thereof. A shingle bank formed across the original bay from Hythe Southwestward and the silt gradually filled the bay behind it. When the land had reached a sufficient level the Rhea Wall was built, running from North West to South East and enclosing this part of the Marsh. The sea was shut out of the Western part of the Marsh much more suddenly, and consequently the silting up did not take place to the same extent, and so the land is much lower, leading to greater difficulty in draining and to much flooding.

The whole district is intersected by land drains and sewers, many of these having dead ends, and almost every field has its own pond. All these places afford breeding ground for gnats and mosquitoes, and the Anopheline Mosquito has been found almost universally, but no cases of malaria have originated in the district, probably on account of the preventive measures taken.

The villages in the district are to the East of the Rhea Wall—Burmarsh, Dymchurch, Newchurch, St. Mary's, and Iychurch. To the West—Brookland, Brenzett, Snargate, and Old Romney.

The Village of Dymchurch, the largest in the district, is the only one which has increased materially in size during the past few years; a number of villa residences for seaside visitors having been erected since. The making up of the foreshore, by the late Mr. Case, with his system of groyning, has provided one of the most perfect stretches of sandy beach as a playground for the visitors.

The occupations of the people are principally agriculture, fishing and the reception of visitors.

During the year 1920 there were 32 male and 40 female births, 1 and 3 respectively being illegitimate ; this gives a birth rate of 26.78 per thousand. There was one still birth in the district.

There were 16 deaths of males and 10 of females, a total of 26 giving a rate of 9.86 per 1000 persons living. There were 5 deaths of infants under one year of age, which with 72 births gives a death rate of 69.44 per thousand children born. The infantile deaths were registered as being caused by Pneumonia, Congenital Heart Disease, Syncope, Pertussis and Bronchitis.

There were 1 death from Pneumonia, 2 from Pulmonary Tuberculosis, 1 from nonpulmonary and 4 from Cancer. There were no deaths from any other zymotic disease.

The following infectious diseases were notified during the year : Erysipelas 2, Scarlatina 2, Diphtheria 1. The following cases of Tuberculosis were notified :—Pulmonary Cert. A.3., two of which were visitors, Cert. D.1., Non Pulmonary Cert. A.1., Cert. C.1.

14 families were in receipt of Poor Law Relief and 14 in receipt of Medical Relief only from the Guardians.

The nearest hospitals are Folkestone and Ashford, which are used freely for surgical cases and emergencies, but hardly at all for medical cases. The only nursing home in the district is the Workhouse Infirmary, so that the respectable poor, who cannot obtain adequate nursing in their own homes, are compelled to receive Poor Law relief. The Romney Marsh and District Nursing Association did a great work in providing cottage nurses for home nursing, but the new Registration of Nurses Act has killed the Association, and now the sick are dependent on their neighbours.

Unfortunately the increase in the size of the Village of Dymchurch has not been accompanied by an improvement in its sanitary conditions. The absence of a good water supply has been pronounced by various Inspectors from the Local Government Board as a grave danger to the health of the community, and apart from any question of health it leads to want of cleanliness, and is at best a very serious inconvenience. The Littlestone Water Company has taken powers to supply the village with water to the exclusion of everyone else, but they refuse to carry the water there except under impossible conditions. The Waterworks' Clauses Act provides that a Company shall not be deemed to have refused to supply unless a request has been made by sufficient ratepayers to pay 10% on the Company's outlay. The Company require a guarantee of 10% on £7,000 as a condition of taking water to Dymchurch, but the total rate of the Village at 1/6 in the £ on the Buildings, etc. amounts only to some £160, therefore the conditions demanded by the Littlestone Water Company are impossible of fulfilment, and in the meantime no one else is able to supply the Village. A largely signed petition from the women of the Village which was forwarded to the Local Government Board, the Kent County Council and the Romney Marsh Rural District Council showed that cottagers living in a £5 house who would pay at 7½%, 7/6 a year or allowing a voluntary rate of equal amount say 15/- are now paying 2/- or 3/- a week for water carrying the length of the Village, where there is not a man in the house who has time to spare. The Company now states that it is not in a position to carry out the work.



This matter is most urgent and should receive the immediate consideration of the Health Ministry.

There is a good drain extending from the school to the West end of the Village where it discharges into the sluice at low tide.

There are 104 houses connected with this drain but unfortunately no provision has been made for the new houses built at the east end of the Village, and they are being provided each with its own cesspool and well.

There are in the Village 2 privies, 104 hand-flushed water-closets, 10 Automatic w.c.'s and 78 pail closets.

A scavenger's cart collects the ashes and empties the pail closets and the same contractor pumps out the cesspools.

The rest of the Villages are very similar to one another in character, Brookland being the only one where there is any considerable aggregation of inhabitants. All these Villages depend for their water supply on sub-soil wells. The closet accommodation varies from that of open privies and cesspools to pail and earth closets. The question of water supply in many of these Villages becomes acute each summer in case of any prolonged drought. The scattered nature of the communities and the distances of such small Villages from one another make a common water policy exceedingly difficult.

The closet accommodation is as follows :—

	Privies and Earth Closets.	Hand-flushed w.c.	Automatic w.c.	Pail Closet.
Blackmanstone				2
Brenzett	8	12	2	42
Brookland	12	28	4	50
Burmarsh	5	4		27
Dymchurch	2	104	10	78
Eastbridge	2	1		8
Fairfield	3	1		30
Hope-all-Saints	1	8		9
Ivychurch	3	4	1	32
Midley	5			9
Newchurch	2	3		49
Old Romney	6		2	28
Organswick				3
St. Martin's	2	3		6
St. Mary's	3	4		26
Snargate	8	3		13
Snave	4	3		9

## SCAVENGING.

## ASHBINS.

Covered bins.	Fixed receptacles.	Deposited in gardens.
195	140	349

The Village of Dymchurch is the only place in which scavenging is undertaken by the Authority.

## SCHOOLS.

The County Medical Officer is the School Medical Officer, your Medical Officer of Health is Inspector of School children under him. Brenzett and Dymchurch Schools and St. Mary's are provided with earth closets, the other schools having privies. The water supply to the Schools is from wells and rainwater tanks, and in none of them is the accommodation for washing adequate.

Milk (Mothers' and Childrens') Order 1918, was adopted by the Council and is administered in co-operation with the County Medical Officer.

Infectious Disease.—There has been very little infectious disease during the year. Bacteriological examinations are made by the County and free use is made of this in the district.

With regard to Tuberculosis. My own experience leads me to say that cases of phthisis die very quickly if they remain in the district. This probably accounts for the small number of notifications in proportion to the number of deaths.

Small Pox.—The Medical Officer of Health has not been asked to perform any vaccinations or re-vaccinations under the Regulations of 1917.

There has been no puerperal fever or Ophthalmia notified during the year.

No action has been taken in regard to Anthrax or Rabies, no extraordinary action was taken during the year. Verminous persons may be cleansed at the Workhouse.

## SANITARY ADMINISTRATION.

The staff consists of the Medical Officer of Health, who is also Medical Officer of Health for the Borough of New Romney, Medical Officer to the Isolation Hospital and Medical Inspector of School Children. He is not in general practice, and there is one Sanitary Inspector, who is also Relieving Officer.

There is one hospital available for Infectious Diseases with 12 beds in 4 wards, and one for Small Pox with 12 beds in 2 wards. Bacteriological examinations are made by the County.

## DRAINAGE.

Number of Houses on Drain ...	...	...	104
Number of Houses with Cesspool (sealed) ...	...	...	382
Number of Houses with Cesspools (unsealed) ...	...	...	198

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

3rd April, 1921.

HENRY HICK.

## RURAL DISTRICT OF ROMNEY MARSH, 1920.

No. of Inspectors of Nuisances, one part-time.

Total Number of visits paid by Inspectors during the year ... 98

	No. in District.	No. of visits in 1920.	No. of defects found.	No. of defects remedied.
Bakehouses ...	2	6	2	2
Dairies } ...	34	26	5	5
Cowsheds }				
Milkshops }				
Slaughter-houses ...	3	6	0	0
Factories } ...	0	0	0	0
Workshops }				
Workplaces }				

*Nuisances found or reported during the year (other than those enumerated in the above tabulation)*

Re Overcrowding ...	No. investigated	2	*No. Abated	2
Re Sanitary accommodation	No. investigated	1	{ *No. Abated 1 Including 1 Conversion of type.	
Re Drainage ...	No. investigated	16	*No. Abated	15
Re Dustbins etc. ...	No. investigated	0	*No. provided	0
Others ...	No. investigated	4	*No. Abated	4

Numbers of each type of Sanitary convenience in district (approximate).

W.C's. into Drainage system	...	...	...	...	105
W.C's. into Cesspools	...	...	...	...	92
Earth closets or privy middens	...	...	...	...	66
Pail closets	...	...	...	...	142

\*Include also nuisances investigated in 1919 and remedied in 1920.

Notices served Statutory	...	17	Informal	...	...	32
No. of houses etc. disinfected	...	...	...	...	...	7
No. of articles of clothing etc. disinfected	...	...	...	...	...	0
*Amount of food condemned during year :—	0 tons	cwts.	qrs.			
lbs. Legal proceedings and results	...	...	...	...	...	0

### HOUSING (INSPECTION OF DISTRICT) REGULATIONS.

(a) Number of houses inspected during the year under Section 17 H.T.P. Act.	...	...	...	...	97
(b) Number found unfit for human habitation	...	...	...	...	2
(c) Number of representations for closing orders	...	...	...	...	2
(d) Closing orders made	...	...	...	...	2
(e) Number of houses put into proper repair, but in which no closing order was necessary	...	...	...	...	0
(f) Number of houses made habitable after closing orders	...	...	...	...	0
(g) Number of Demolition Orders	...	...	...	...	1
(h) Houses demolished	...	...	...	...	1

## NO. OF NEW HOUSES ERECTED DURING 1920.

(a) Under District Council's Scheme	...	...	...	0
(b) By private enterprise	...	...	...	9

Is the housing shortage less acute than in 1919, through reasons other than recent erections (e.g. removals from district due to unemployment etc.)

The housing shortage remains the same as in 1919.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

STEPHEN MILLEN,

*Inspector of Nuisances.*



## APPENDICES.

### HOUSING CONDITIONS.

#### STATISTICS.

Year ended 31st December 1920.

#### 1.—GENERAL.

(1) Estimated population	...	...	...	...	2684
(2) General death-rate	...	...	...	...	9.68
(3) Death-rate from tuberculosis	...	...	...	...	1.11
(4) Infantile mortality	...	...	...	...	69.44
(5) Number of dwelling-houses of all classes	...	...	...	...	669
(6) Number of working-class dwelling-houses	...	...	...	...	505
(7) Number of new working-class houses erected	...	...	...	...	5

#### 2.—UNFIT DWELLING-HOUSES.

##### I.—INSPECTION.

(1) Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts) ...	...	...	...	...	140
(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were inspected and recorded under the Housing (Inspection of District) Regulations, 1910 ...	...	...	...	...	97
(3) Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation ...	...	...	...	...	2
(4) Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-heading) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation ...	...	...	...	...	6

##### II.—REMEDY OF DEFECTS WITHOUT SERVICE OF FORMAL NOTICES.

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers ...	...	...	...	...	0
---	-----	-----	-----	-----	---

##### III.—ACTION UNDER STATUORY POWERS.

###### A. *Proceedings under section 28 of the Housing, Town Planning, &c., Act, 1919.*

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs ...	...	...	...	...	0
(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit—					
(a) by owners ...	...	...	...	...	0
(b) by Local Authority in default of owners	...	...	...	...	0
(3) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders became operative in pursuance of declarations by owners of intention to close ...	...	...	...	...	0

B. *Proceedings under Public Health Acts.*

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied ... ..	0
(2) Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied—	
(a) by owners ... ..	0
(b) by Local Authority in default of owners	0

C. *Proceedings under sections 17 and 18 of the Housing, Town Planning, &c., Act, 1909.*

(1) Number of representations made with a view to the making of Closing Orders ... ..	2
(2) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders were made ... ..	2
(3) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the dwelling-houses having been rendered fit ...	0
(4) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made ...	1
(5) Number of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders ... ..	1

3.—UNHEALTHY AREAS.

Areas represented to the Local Authority with a view to Improvement Schemes under (a), Part I., or (b), Part II., of the Act of 1890 :—

(1) Name of area ... ..	0
(2) Acreage ... ..	0
(3) Number of working-class houses in area ... ..	0
(4) Number of working-class persons to be displaced ...	0

4.—Number of houses not complying with the building byelaws erected with consent of Local Authority under section 25 of the Housing, Town Planning, &c., Act, 1919 ...

5.—Staff engaged on housing work with, briefly, the duties of each officer ... .. inspector 1